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ABSTRACT

The visual arts offer aesthetic, perceptual, creative, and intellectual opportunities. This lesson points out that by creating and painting mythological characters, students will improve their ability to analyze, reorganize, critique, and create. The lesson also intends for fourth-grade students to gain insight into Greek culture through the exploration of Greek mythology. It offers an overview; suggests length and grade level; lists subjects and subtopics; cites dimensions of learning and intelligences being addressed; notes equipment and materials needed; lists teacher resources; and addresses National Standards for Arts Education. The lesson also identifies instructional objectives and strategies; provides a detailed, step-by-step instructional plan; and suggests assessment activities. Contains teacher references and a rubric for an art activity, as well as a rubric for group presentation and participation. (NKA)

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Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Greek Mythology: Cultures and Art

Resource Type: lesson

Length: Three 50-minute class periods

Grade: 4

Subjects: Language Arts, Social Studies, Visual Arts

Subtopics: Drawing, English, History, Literature, Painting, Social: Multicultural

Intelligences Being Addressed:

- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:

- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Attitudes and perceptions about learning
- Extension and refinement of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge
- Productive habits of the mind

Overview: The visual arts offer aesthetic, perceptual, creative, and intellectual opportunities. By creating and painting mythological characters, students will improve their ability to analyze, reorganize, critique, and create. Students will also gain insight into Greek culture through the exploration of Greek mythology.

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Equipment:

- Computer Mac or PC with Internet access

Media & Materials:

- Book: *Book of Greek Myths*, by Ingri D'Aulaire,
- Image: Samples of art from Greek Mythology,

Printouts: This lesson has printouts. They are referenced in the "Student Supplies" or "Other Materials" sections below.

Student Supplies:

- Large watercolor paper, paint, and brushes for every student.
- Water jugs/cans for brush cleaning.
- Encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Other Materials:

- Rubric handout

Related Textbooks: None

Teacher Internet Resources:

Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:

- **Illustrated Encyclopedia of Greek Mythology**
  http://www.cultures.com/greek_resources/greek_encyclopedia/greek_encyclopedia_home.html

  This encyclopedia will define terms related to Greek mythology: from the Furies to the Parthenon, and from Zeus to the Cyclopes.

- **Look in the Mythic Mirror**
  http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teaching_materials/curricula/curric/mythicmirror/

  This is a 10-week curriculum unit relative to the study of myths for grades 6-8, integrating concepts from language arts, music, and visual arts.

- **Mythweb**
  http://www.mythweb.com/

  This resource contains information on heroes, gods, and monsters of Greek mythology. It includes lesson plans, illustrated stories, and an encyclopedia.

General Internet Resources:

- **Perseus Digital Library: Art and Archaeology Resources**

http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/art&arch.html

This site contains a massive library of art objects, sites, and buildings, including Greek art. It contains over 33,000 images accompanied by descriptions.

- **Welcome to World Mythology**
  http://www.artsMIA.org/mythology/index.html

  This collection of images brings together 24 works of art inspired by mythology around the world. The rich variety of images makes it possible to address a wide range of study areas, including language arts, humanities, art, and cultural studies.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 1 : Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 2 : Using knowledge of structures and functions
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 3 : Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 4 : Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 6 : Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

Source of Standards:

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will respond to in-class group readings and individual research of Greek mythology. Students will create, illustrate, and write about their own mythical characters. Students will create watercolor illustrations, write short stories about their created character, and relate it to a specific element of mythology. Students will use the Internet, library, and in-class resources to discover basic elements of Greek mythology. In a guided-question group discussion, students will share verbally what they have learned about Greek mythology.

Students will also look at other archetypal heroes and compare and contrast. Students will be able to express their creation in a culminating group forum activity verbally and in writing. Students will be able to identify their character's special abilities and verbally express what they mean to him/her in a group presentation forum.

Strategies:

- Guided group discovery

- Student-centered questions and answers
- Group discussion
- Direct instruction

Instructional Plan:

Vocabulary

Myth: comes from the Greek word "mythos," which originally meant "speech" or"discourse" but which later came to mean "fable" or "legend."

Mythology: refers to a collection of myths that together form a mythological system.

Demigod: a half god or an inferior deity; a fabulous hero, the offspring of a deity and a mortal.

Attributes: that which is attributed; a quality that is considered as belonging to, or inherent in a person or thing; an essential or necessary property or characteristic.

Symbol: something that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention.

Introduction:

After a group reading of *Book of Greek Myths* by Ingri and Edgar D'Aulaire, students will engage in open questioning and guided discussion of what they think about the reading. After generating some ideas, introduce the terms and objectives of the assignment. Provide a sample of the assignment geared toward appropriate developmental ability. Show some pictures of different archetypal characters and discuss who they are.

Teacher Sequence

Motivational sequence

Gather students close together on the floor. Show pictures and discuss. Ask the following questions:

- What do you think of this picture/s?
- What first came into your mind when you first saw the picture/s?
- Who created this piece and why?
- When was this art created?
- What do you think the picture means; what does it represent?

While displaying the pictures, read about a Greek god from the *Book of Greek Myths*. Ask questions again. Give students time to explore the questions. Use examples of what was just read to introduce key terms (see "Vocabulary" section).

Research Activity

Introduce and explain the lesson. Students will be broken up into groups of four to research and develop their mythological characters. Hand out the worksheet and read and discuss; check for understanding. Go over the terms and write the definitions for *attribute*, *symbol* and *myth* on the board.

Have students answer specific questions from the Web research and adjust their time on the

computers so that all students will have ample time at the computer. Answers to the handout can be found in classroom encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other in-class literature.

After students answer the questions on the handout, get together and discuss what they discovered.

Written Activity

Introduce the creative writing/art assignment. Students are to create their own mythological character that has one symbol and at least one attribute. Have students use their handout as a reference for examples related to the assignment. They must use complete sentences and punctuation. Encourage creativity by reminding students that the components of their writing should be important to them.

Creative Art Activity: Watercolor

Have students illustrate the key points in the written activity in a watercolor art project. Review the key points: one character, one symbol, one attribute, and a verbal explanation of how their creation is meaningful to the student. Encourage students to be creative and unique; they should be limited only by the three objectives stated above.

While students work on the activity, discuss how color and shape can be used to depict mood and tone. Display any pictures you have, in addition to the ones shown in the introduction, and point out different ways the colors and shapes are used in each picture.

Circle the room, commenting on aspects of the assignment and on the student creations. Ask for explanations of what the students are painting while encouraging responses to provoke deeper thought, such as: Your symbol is very interesting. What does it mean to you? I can tell by the detail in your character you have given it a lot of thought. Why does he have that expression? Why did you use those colors? Do they relate to your character in any specific way? Could they?

Student Activity Sequence

1. After the introduction and discussion, introduce and explain lesson. Students will be broken up into groups of four to research mythological characters. Rotate groups periodically so all groups get a chance to use all available resources.
2. Research: After completing the worksheet and in-group discussion, students will share what they learned, connecting what they have learned with cultural and historical context. Who created the mythological gods? When were they created? Where were they created? Why were they created? All students should participate at some level.
3. Written activity: Breaking back into groups of four, students are to create their own mythological character that has one symbol and one attribute, and which is accompanied by an explanation of what meaningful significance their character has. Using complete sentences, they will write one page. Students will use their handout as a reference for examples related to the assignment. They can discuss as they work, but only about the activity.
4. Creative Art Activity: While viewing and critiquing art and reflecting on the written assignment, students will create their mythological characters in watercolor activity. Students will illustrate the key points of their written assignment in a watercolor art project. Review key points: one character, one symbol, one attribute, and meaningful significance. Ask students to consider using colors that reflect the attribute, symbol, mood, tone, or emotion that their character represents.
5. In groups of four, have students in each group do different tasks to begin. One student gets paper for their group, one gets paint, one gets brushes, and the last gets water jugs/cans for cleaning the brushes.
6. At end of activity, students will individually share his/her art with the teacher. Students will

identify their characters, explain the attribute and symbol and what it means to them. Make sure students have signed their art.

Closure:

Have students gather in forum in big circle on floor with their written and painted activities. Begin by reviewing the vocabulary terms introduced at the beginning of the lesson.

Ask the following questions:

- What is a myth?
- How do myths help us understand ourselves and others?
- How are myths reflected in culture?

Restate the assignment and ask for volunteers to share either their stories or an explanation of the three components in their mythological creations. Have students ask the presenter questions. Each student must participate. Then, ask students as a group the following questions, rotating around the circle from student to student:

- Which of the characters that we studied did you find most interesting? Why?
- Did you have any problems with this assignment? If any, what were they?
- What did you like most about these activities? What did you like the least?

Adding any other questions that are generated during discussion, gauge when discussion has been exhausted, then wrap up the discussion with a summary of everything the students accomplished and learned. Note their research, writing, and art and appropriately highlight problems that occurred and how they were resolved. Congratulate all students on a job well done in an appropriate fashion. Display all art in one area of the room (if possible).

Clean-up:

Creative art portion only (10 minutes): One person per group of 4 students is designated to collect and clean brushes, one to collect and clean the counters, one to return all other materials to the correct place, and one to collect everyone's art, checking to see that all pieces have been signed and handed in per teacher's instruction. One student should be assigned to clean up remaining tissue pieces from the group and another student should wipe down the desks with wet paper towels after the desks are cleared.

Assessment: Students will be evaluated in the following methods:

Written evaluation:

Students will be evaluated in written form by their completion of the worksheet and short stories. Worksheet evaluated on accuracy.

Stories must contain an imaginary mythical character with an explanation of what that character means to the students as well as a symbol and attribute also stated in the writing. Student must use complete sentences. There should be about one page worth of writing. Length should not be more important than the main elements of the writing.

Oral Evaluation:

Student must answer an oral quiz by the teacher at the end of the art activity. Student must be able to identify and explain his/her created mythological character and its personal meaning or significance. Student will identify at least one Greek mythological character and attribute.

Group presentation and participation:

Students will be assessed on their group presentation. Did they identify their character, symbol, and attribute? Were they able to share with the group what was meaningful to them about their character?

In group participation, were they able to make meaningful connections with other students' work or their own? Did they develop or gain meaningful connections between the activities and their historical contexts? Did students identify the age and location of the subjects they studied?

Extensions: None

Teacher References:

Book of Greek Myths. D' Aulaire, Ingri, and Edgar. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1962. Children's Literature.
(This is an excellent collection of Greek myths written for children.)

Bulfinch's Mythology. Bulfinch, Thomas. New York: Anvel Books, 1978.
(This is a definitive encyclopedia of mythology. It contains broad selections of ancient poetry, drama, and literature.)

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Review Date:

ARTSEDGENotes:

Rubric for art activity

	Exemplary	Adequate	Needs Work
Watercolor project	Character in painting is original and has an obvious symbol and attribute. Student can fully verbally explain their character, symbol, and attribute which they have created.	Character in painting but elements are not well depicted. Student can verbally explain their character, symbol and attribute which they created.	Character and elements missing or not appropriate. Student unable to understand instructions. Student has difficulty understanding assignment.

Rubric for written evaluation

	Exemplary	Adequate	Needs Work
Web worksheet	All questions are answered correctly and appropriately.	All but 1 or 2 questions answered correctly . Most answers are appropriate.	More than 2 incomplete answers and/ or inappropriate answers.
Short Stories	Story contains well defined imaginary character with special symbol and attribute. Must have complete sentences. One page in length or more.(if element are present and well defined disregard length)	Story contains defined imaginary character with symbol and attribute. No more than two incomplete sentences. One page in length, or close to it. .(if elements are present and well defined, disregard length)	Story contains character but not as per intructions and /or symbol or attribute missing. Many incomplete sentences. Less than a page with missing elements

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Charles Nickerson
EDCI 213
Rubric for Integrated arts lesson plan
4/30/00

Rubric for group presentation and participation

	Exemplary	Adequate	Needs Work
Group Presentation	Student participated in group presentation. Student identified their character, symbol and attribute? They are able to share what was meaningful to them about their character? Student is able make meaningful connections with other students' work. Student identified the general age and location of the mythological characters studied?	Student participated in group presentation. They identified their character, symbol and attribute? They are vague of their characters meaning or unable to express that meaning. Student is unable make meaningful connections with other students' work or makes inappropriate connection. Student unsure of period of mythology, but knows it was a long time ago. Student at least identifies that Greek Mythology is not American.	Student froze or was unable to give presentation. Student could not express or identify meaning of their character. Missing symbol and or/ attribute. Student is unable make meaningful connections with other students' work . Student unable to understand lesson instructions.
Participation	Student participated in all activities and met all unit objectives requiring group collaboration. Student was cooperative with others.	Student participated in most activities and met all unit objectives requiring group collaboration. Student was mostly cooperative, with little exception.	Student demonstrated difficulty working with others . Student was unable to cooperate effectively with group. (if more than one student behaves this way in any given group, check group dynamics and/or other members of group)

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